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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE AND NEA/MAG

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SUBJECT: FM MORATINOS URGES NORTH AFRICAN "COLLECTIVE SECURITY" SYSTEM

Classified By: Political Counselor Kathy Fitzpatrick; reason 1.4 (b)

1. (U) During a visit to Paris, FM Miguel Angel Moratinos urged the governments of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Mauritania to begin laying the groundwork for the formation of a "collective security system" to help foster regional stability. Moratinos acknowledged that his recommendation was "very premature," but said the time had come for North African countries to begin incorporating military cooperation into their long term regional integration plans. During a joint appearance with French FM Barnier and Moroccan Deputy FM Fassi-Fehri, Moratinos suggested that a "Maghrebi collective defense system" could maintain relations with "Euromediterranean (countries) and with NATO."

2. (C) On May 11, Poloff contacted Carlos Fernandez Arias, MFA adviser on security issues to DG for Foreign Policy Rafael Dezcallar and until recently the Office Director for Maghreb Affairs, to request further information regarding Moratinos' proposal. Arias said that Moratinos was not announcing a new initiative; his statements were in line with broader Spanish efforts to encourage North African political/economic integration in order to stabilize Spain's vulnerable southern flank. As an aside, Arias (protect) said Moratinos' statement amounted to "wishful thinking" and said it should be seen as a political statement intended to reduce regional tensions rather than as an action plan. Arias said Moratinos' comments did not imply any shift in Spanish views regarding NATO's security relations with North African countries.

MANZANARES